

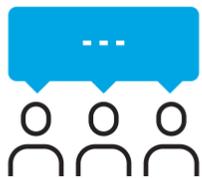
# 10 Ways to Navigate a Family Business

For many people in this industry, retail and family go hand-in-hand. While running a family business is rewarding, it is not always easy. *Hardware Retailing* spoke with Wayne Rivers, co-founder and president of The Family Business Institute to gather 10 tips family business leaders can implement in any retail operation. ➔

## START

### 1. Communication Is Key

A majority of issues coming from management are communication problems, Rivers says. The only way to get better at communicating is to practice. In some cases, this means family business leaders should step away from the urgent, day-to-day operations tasks to focus on the bigger picture.



### 5. Continuous Improvement

Top family business leaders are always looking to improve themselves, their people, their families and their organization, he says. Business leaders don't fall prey to the idea of "that's the way we have always done it here," which represents clinging to the status quo. Visionary family business leaders understand that the status quo holds the organization back. Avoiding necessary and desirable change is the greater enemy to family businesses over the long haul.

### 2. Strategic Management

The best manager is a strategic manager because strategic planning yields so many benefits for family businesses, Rivers says. The use of long-range planning, advanced 21st-century management tools, and modern family governance practices increases the amount of communication, information and knowledge sharing in family businesses, which in turn strengthens and improves the organization and the company culture and can increase business opportunities.

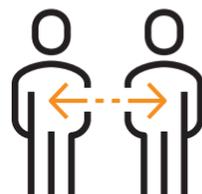
### 4. Dealing With Change

The best leaders see change and challenge as opportunities while simultaneously avoiding a victim mentality, Rivers says. It's important to not only recognize change is a fact of business life, but to learn to anticipate it and get ahead of it to be prepared and take advantage of new opportunities before the competition does.



### 3. People Management

The most successful retailers are those who recognize and acknowledge their people, Rivers says. If you don't have a system for the care, training and nurturing of your team, you're not going to attract top talent. Hire excellent employees instead of average, and then recognize and thank them.



### 7. Growth-Oriented People Define Growth

Growth doesn't happen by itself, Rivers says. Leaders who are passionate about what they do, investing in and developing their people and making continuous and never-ending improvements create either written or mental designs to grow. It's not coincidental; they have big-picture plans with clear goals in mind and they develop execution plans focused on growth.



### 8. The Importance of 'What If' Scenarios and Contingency Plans

Successful leaders manage risk in a calculated way, Rivers says. They don't wait for life to slap them in the face, but look months and years into the future to identify obstacles. Instead of sinking into worry, they plan for the unexpected.



### 6. Skills Development

Successful family-business leaders know that when they graduate high school or college, the everyday lessons aren't over. These types of leaders immerse themselves in crucial lifelong skills like relationship-building, process mapping, communicating with others on a deep, meaningful level, risk management, creative thinking and managerial accounting, Rivers says. Visionary leaders seek out training and education in these areas since they know learning never stops. They're hungry to find the knowledge and information to allow them to stay one step ahead of the competition.

### 9. Working With Others, Even Family

The unwillingness or inability to work with others—including family—has been and will be a downfall for family businesses. Business owners value their independence, flexibility and the ability to chart their own paths, yet when they start families, they often shape their children in their own images. Rather than dismiss their adult children's ideas and influence when they join the business, it's important to get along with others, inside and outside the family. Independence must be put aside for a greater focus on mutual benefit and cooperation.

## FINISH

### 10. Develop Future Business Leaders

The most successful business leaders enjoy and take pride in developing future leaders, Rivers says. They must remove themselves from the day-to-day in favor of mentoring, next-generation and successor training and being stewards of their family business.

